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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT



DR. JOHN BYERS WILSON
Freethought Writer of Poetry and Prose.

A. T. Parker
High and Ashland East Side
Sep 08

DR. JOHN BYERS WILSON

Acknowledged to be one of the foremost, brilliant and epic writers in America. Forceful and polished, vigorous and convincing, argumentative and winning his writings have touched the hearts of thousands of Freethinkers in America. Wherever a liberal is found there is Dr. Wilson known, loved, admired and respected. For years he has been one of the best and truest friends the Blade has had the good fortune to enjoy. Ready at all times to lend a hand when the task became hard, and never too busy in the practice of his profession to do something for the needs and wants of struggling humanity.

The subject of this brief sketch is of Scotch Irish parentage, and a native of Adams county, Ohio. His father, David Finley Wilson, was a man of fair education, and possessed a remarkable memory, and some poetical talent.

His mother, Evelyn Campbell, was a direct descendant of the famous Clan Campbell, of Scotland. Her grand-father, Matthew Campbell, becoming a Dissenter, was alienated from his family, given five thousand pounds, and told to go to America, and stay there. That was a common method in those days, with noble families, of getting rid of their obstreperous and no-account sons, who assumed to have some opinions of their own, and stood by them. The result was that the American colonies were the gainers by the infusion of this hot-blooded youth, which became the bravest and ablest defenders.

Matthew Campbell, first settled in Virginia. His adventurous nature soon led him toward the west, and he settled at Lewistown, now Maysville, Ky., the farthest settlement west at that time on the Ohio river. Here, he married a Miss Shelby, a sister of the first governor of Kentucky. Soon after he built a large stone house on the opposite bank, which served as both fortress and inn. The village which sprang up around him was named Aberdeen, after the city of the same name in Scotland. Some years later, in company with a number of settlers, he descended the Ohio on a raft, and erected the first house on the present site of Cincinnati.

Dr. Wilson's youth was that of the ordinary village lad, more or less bolsterous, the inventor of many a prank, and leader in helping to tear up the town on Hallow Eve, and other privileged occasions. His greatest delight, however, as a lad, were his solitary rambles through the dense

and heavy forests which abounded at that time, familiarizing himself with every tree and leaf, shrub and flower, animal and insect, light and shadow, tint and shape. This, the Doctor claims, was his best education "among the hills and hollows of Adams County."

He attended the village school, labored on the farm, and in his sixteenth year, started out for himself, as teacher of a country school.

For the next ten years he followed this pursuit, working at various employments during his vacations, finally settling in Cincinnati, and after four years of ups and downs, such as would test the courage of the stoutest heart, graduated in medicine in 1899. Soon after, he was appointed ward physician to the worthy poor. Here, for the next three years he fought disease in its worst forms, his battlefield being the slums. Here, too, through a financial crisis, he came to know the virtues and vices, the wants and woes, the heroisms and affections, the sorrows and afflictions of the destitute poor, the utter degradation of those who at best become nothing more than driftwood on the stream of time. Here he lived in the midst of hunger, intemperance, and every vice and ill that poverty breeds.

These observations led him to the study of the social and economic conditions. He, himself had felt the stings of poverty, and had known hunger, but had been able to rise out of it; but here upon every hand, were young and old, depraved by conditions, from which there was no seeming escape. Why should this be so, where nature is so beautiful to all? He asked how much the fault of the individual, and how much of government? To him the one great problem seemed, not spiritual welfare in some other world, but human misery in this life.

All these varied avocations and experiences of country, village and city life, of farm and school and travel, of educational professional and literary pursuits have tended to make of Dr. Wilson a man of broad and liberal ideas and of strong convictions. Fearlessly he attacks all forms of society, which to him appear to perpetuate ignorance, superstition and social injustice and wrong.

Dr. Wilson early became a convert to the teachings of Paine and Ingersoll, and has distinguished himself as their disciple. Among the liberals of the country, he has been a leading and popular spirit, and won a national reputation. He has been President of the National organiza-

tions, known as "The American Secular Union," and The American Freethought Association," and from the latter was sent as National Delegate to the International Freethought Congress that convened in Rome in September 1904.

On his return, he wrote an account of that trip and a report of that Congress, which was published in book form, under the title of "A Trip to Rome," which has met with universal praise from the many who have read it.

The greatest legal victory ever achieved in this country by Freethinkers over the United States Court, was that of the liberation from prison of Editor C. C. Moore.

This fight was generated by Dr. Wilson, whose brilliant pen, tipped with the fire of courage and truth, had the effect of rallying the Liberals of the nation, in a determined and successful fight against the bigotry which sought the destruction of Editor Moore and the suppression of this paper.

In his official relations with Freethinkers, Dr. Wilson was equally courageous. He stood for the people, as against the machine. Everything had to be right out in the open, and above-board, or not at all, and so, he bravely and successfully opposed the powers, which had reduced Liberal Organization to a mere pretense.

Besides his immense labors in Freethought propaganda, and the active duties of his profession, Dr. Wilson has found time to court the muse, and is now busily engaged in preparing a book of verse for publication. His verse, like his other writings, is marked by a wide versatility. Competent critics rank him high among authors, who have written along the same lines and predict that he will occupy a permanent niche in American literature. In this issue is printed one of his characteristic poems.

Dr. Wilson was married in 1892 to Miss Alma Kephart of Washington Court House Ohio, which union was blessed by one brilliant daughter, Marjorie, who passed away two years ago.

Dr. Wilson is a member of the Academy of Medicine, Cincinnati, The Ohio Valley Medical Association, The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Knight of Pythias, and the Fraternal Insurance Societies known as "The Independent Order of Foresters, Knights of the Maccabees, Knights of the Ladies of Security, and Tribe of Ben Hur. For all of these he is Medical Examiner, as well as Examiner for some of the leading old line companies.

Somebody Has To Sin

BY DR. J. B. WILSON.

Some minds Nature makes as low as the clod,
To genins some she exalts;
And all the long way betwixt the extremes,
At every footstep she halts;
The human brain she diversifies,
In size and shape and degree;
Making none alike, nor to think alike,
But all of some use to be.

Thus infinitely different all men she makes,
To incline them different ways;
To search out the infinite secrets she hides,
From our won'd'ring human gaze;
Infinitely varied men too, she designs,
In the sense of right and wrong;
In character, conduct, will and resolve,
The weak she makes and the strong.

No levels there are in Nature's designs,
All is mountain, hill and plain;
Nor either without the other can be,
Likewise, the structure of brain;
No level of thought, or faith, or belief,
Can apply to human life;
Each positive force has its negative,
Each peace its conquest and strife.

Thus nature her equilibrium holds,
And sway, o'er the human race;
Maintaining her balance twixt right and wrong,
As they fight each other for place;
Essential is sin to the growth of man,
Or else, it would never be;
For, ever 'tis sin inspireth the good,
To fight for supremacy.

Since Nature, then, made the good and bad,
And our beings placed them within,
Then somebody has to do the right,
And somebody has to sin;
For ever these forces in man are at war,
For mastery of his will;
Some more thn their share of good perform,
Some more than their share of ill.

If chance I be good, and if you be bad,
I certainly owe you much,
For not only your share, but mine you bear,
Of sin, that holds you in clutch;
To such as are good thro' breeding and ease,
And in soil superior grow,
No credit to you is particularly due,
For it only happened so.

Since the good are good at expense of sin,
Most virtue is piously shammed;
And hard the heart in its virtue secure,
That would damn the already damned;
May be in the life that is next to come,
Conditions will be reversed;
The sinful here take the place of the good,
The good the place of the cursed.

For Nature evolves thro' constant change,
And disproportion her rule;
In the place of the wisest man today,
Tomorrow may stand the fool;
And those who've borne the brunt of the sin,
Which Nature here has decreed,
Best deserve a chance in the other life
And of their frailties be freed.

Then since it be plain the good and the bad
In the human soil is sown;
And unequal the sin imposed upon some,
By never a choice of their own,
A pity show ye, for the vicious all,
In their degradation bound;
Who, burdened for life with your share of sin,
Grovel ever close to the ground.

Oh! ye women, pure as the spotless snow,
And chaste as the crystal ice,
Your Puritan poise is only maintained
By your's sister's shame and vice;
And ye holy and wise, forget ye not,
As ye soar in prayer and song,
That you're only able to do the right,
Because somebody does the wrong.

Somebody's daughters and somebody's sons
The sins of the future must bear,
And the chances are the child of your heart,
Will carry more than his share;
If for Nature's sins, you believe, at last,
Into endless pain, he'll be hurled,
You're the cruellest demon that ever lived,
To have brought him into the world.

Oh men! Oh! women! misguided in thought,
With reason come ye and sup:
No need from the future have men to be saved,
But here to be lifted up;
Life's a battle betwixt the right and the wrong,
In which neither one can win,
For while somebody has to do the good,
Still somebody has to sin.

Persistence of Superstition

NO. 1.

There are Neither Gods or Devils Who
Dispute With Each Other Over the
Souls of Men.

(By Dr. T. J. Bowles.)

Every cultured man and every cultured woman on this earth now know, to a positive and absolute certainty, that every human being in this world who kneels and worships at the shrine of any supernatural religion, is a devotee of the most ancient and degrading superstition.

Every scheme of Redemption and Salvation from sin, founded upon the incarnation and crucifixion of a God, all the higher types of men and women now know, are myths and legends, conceived and written in the infancy of the human race, when man was in the savage and barbarous periods of his career on earth, and but a few degrees removed from his animal ancestors.

Every student of Ethnography is familiar with the fact, that all the Gods and all the Devils, and all the spirits and all the ghosts, that have ever lived and flourished in the brain of the human race, are personifications and deifications of the objects and forces in Nature.

Every psychologist knows that this was natural and necessary, because all primitive and savage people have no idea whatever of natural law, and until the idea of natural law dawns upon the mind, all the phenomena of Nature have to be explained in terms of personal agency.

Because of this necessity of thought, primitive and savage man had to believe that nearly all the objects and forces in Nature were endowed with personality like themselves; and in this way the sun, which we know to be the center of our system of worlds, they were compelled, by the necessities of thought to believe, was a Supreme Being and an all-powerful God, and there is not a nation that ever lived upon the earth but what its people at some time in their history have worshipped the sun, as the Supreme and Almighty God of the universe.

It will thus be seen that primitive and savage men were compelled naturally to people the whole world with supernatural beings, and these myths and the legends which grew out of them fill the pages of all holy books, and divine revelations from the Egyptian Book of the Dead, which is the oldest, down to the Mormon Bible, which

is the latest communication and revelation from the Gods to man.

Every one of these divine revelations and holy books are full of superstitions, in a modified form, that prevailed among all primitive peoples hundreds of thousands of years ago, while man was yet a savage.

One of the oldest of these debasing superstitions that dominated the life of all primitive peoples, constitutes the foundation of every scheme of supernatural religion in the world today.

All primitive people from the necessity of thought were compelled to believe that their Gods were like themselves, only greater and more powerful, and that they loved and hated, and that their favor could be secured by gifts, and their wrath averted by sacrifices.

To appease the anger of the Gods, and escape punishment by the sacrifice of innocent victims was a universal practice among all ancient people from time immemorial.

These superstitions about sacrifices were perfectly natural and necessary during the long night of savagery and barbarism, because during these stages of mental development all the phenomena of Nature had to be explained in terms of personal agency, and every remarkable display of natural force, like volcanoes and earthquakes; thunder and lightning; floods and pestilences; storms and eclipses, had to be explained as the work of exasperated Gods, and sacrifices of animals and innocent men, women and children, they supposed, were absolutely necessary to pacify these infuriated Gods and Devils.

In this purely natural way, sacrificial religion had its birth, and became universal among all the primitive peoples of the earth, and for tens of thousands of years the whole earth was a slaughter-house, and countless millions of animals, men women and children were sacrificed, to appease the wrath of the Gods, and secure their favor; it will thus be seen that the diabolical superstition of vicarious atonement to satisfy and pacify the wrath of God is as old as the human race.

On this foundation of superstition rests all the supernatural religion that now curse the human family, and fill the world with sorrow, discord and strife, for explanation by the sacrifice of a God, and redemption through the death of a Divine and Incarnate Savior, is but the culmination of the idea and practice of all our remote

ancestors, that the Gods demanded a sacrifice of some kind to atone for sin, and avert calamity.

Like our savage ancestors, who lived in dens and caves, the modern priests of superstition still teach innocent men, women and children, that the curse of God against the sinful, must be removed by transferring the load of guilt onto the shoulders of innocence.

Like our primitive forefathers, in whose minds the idea of law had not yet dawned, the priests of modern superstition still prostitute the minds of innocent men, women and children with the infamous falsehood that divine justice required the blood of innocence.

Like our savage and blood-thirsty progenitors, who cherished the superstition that the slaughter of animals and men would pacify their Gods, the modern priests of superstition debauch the minds of innocent men, women and children with the awful superstition, that the death of his innocent and sinless son was demanded by their God Jehovah. This dreadful and infinitely absurd superstition, that the Infinite and Eternal Cause of all things, had a son, and cruelly put him to death in a scheme of redemption for the human race, let us hope, will soon forever disappear from the mind of civilized men.

Like our remote and brutal ancestors, whose Gods were all anthropomorphic, and had an insatiable appetite for blood, our modern priests of superstition insist that their God, Jehovah, could devise no scheme of salvation without shedding the innocent blood of his only son and sinless son.

Our glorious scheme of redemption, it will thus be seen, rests upon the terrible superstition that prevailed universally among our wild and ferocious primitive ancestors, that the wrath of the Gods could only be appeased by the shedding of blood.

Such is the magical and wonderful scheme of atonement; man is poor, miserable and fallen being; he is responsible for the sins of our first parents; a law has been broken, and to satisfy the justice of the Infinite and Eternal Cause of all things, he descends from his home in Heaven to the earth, and in the person of Christna, he enters the womb of a virgin, and is born and nursed like other babes, and when he grows to the stature of manhood, he permits himself to be crucified and buried, and then bursts the bonds of his tomb, rises from the dead, and goes back to his home in heaven; again he repeats this process in the person of Osiris; and again in the person of Quetzalcoatl, and still again until his descents, incarnations, crucifixions, resurrections, and ascensions reach the respectable number of fifteen experiments, and finally he comes down from his celestial abode into Palestine, and creates a wide-

spread scandal by overshadowing the Virgin Mary, who happened to be the affianced bride of one Joseph, a carpenter by trade.

The same old process that he had gone through fifteen times previously were again repeated; gestation for nine months; birth; dentition; diseases of children; nursing and weaning; innocent sports of childhood; growing, maturing, and learning a trade, and later on, preaching and performing miracles, and finally arranging for his crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension to his home in heaven.

Such is a brief history of sacrificial religion, and vicarious atonement, which has cursed the human race beyond all the power of all the languages of all the tribes and of all the nations of Earth to fitly express and portray.

We can condone the infinite horrors of our primitive ancestors for their bloody sacrifices, during their long night of mental darkness, for then the earth and sky were filled with demons and monsters, but what shall we say of the modern priests of superstition, who still persist in poisoning the minds of innocent men, women and children with these awful myths and legends of supernatural religion.

The boundless love of free thinkers, Rationalists, and Monists is put severely to the test, when we remember that this is the bright morning of the twentieth century, and that all intelligent men and women should be able to see and realize that these dreadful superstitions should be forever swept from the brain of the human race, for it is certain that modern priests cannot help but know that the supernatural does not and cannot exist; they cannot help but know that the rhythm of cause and effect is eternal; they cannot help but know that the universe is all that is, all that ever was, and all that ever can be; they cannot help but know that we live in but know that antecedent and consequent are eternally and indissolubly bound together; they cannot help but know that the transformation of substance and force is an everlasting process, and that it comprises the whole history of our beautiful world; they cannot help but know that the infinite cosmos and all its forces are purely impersonal, and that neither Gods nor Devils are concerned in any of its movements or processes; they cannot help but know that in the scheme of Nature all miracles are absurd and impossible, and that all the Gods and all the Devils, and all the priests in the whole world combined cannot suspend, for a single moment, any law of Nature; they cannot help but know that every feeling, every motion, and every volition in a human being are but the correlative equivalents of physical changes in the brain; they know that the

salvation of a wicked man, by the death of an innocent brother, is infamous and horrible, and they know, if the existence of a personal God was possible, that he would abhor it with all his infinite love and justice.

They know that nowhere in the universe can be found a God and a Devil eternally fighting each other in their struggle to capture the souls of men; they know that this horrible night-mare had its origin in the dark night of savagery and barbarism, when primitive men were compelled, from the necessities of thought, to personify and deify good and evil.

These priests of superstition certainly know all these things, and how they can be wicked enough to constantly labor to extinguish the beautiful sun of science, and to deify the fabulous son of a mythical God, passes all human understanding, and it severely taxes the boundless love of an infidel to throw the mantle of charity over them.

How long! O, how long will it yet be before mankind will learn that the glorious light of science, kindled by the sacred flame of human love would fill the world with joy and happiness.

Remove the Clouds

Kingcraft and Priestcraft Seeking to
Establish a World Despotism.

(By G. W. McCormick.)

Intelligent people both recognize and admit that a dense, dark cloud of superstition, threatening and dangerous, hangs over the destiny of mankind and that unless it is successfully pierced an eternal gloom confronts the race.

This cloud is plainly visible to every intelligence that admits a responsibility to the great, ever-existent, law of Nature, that great law, which like time and space, had no beginning and will have no end. Natural law always was and always will be as far back to a supposed beginning as to a supposed ending. It is impossible to draw a line through time or space and say time did not exist before it and will not exist after it.

Call this law god if you will, call it what you please. It cannot be an animal or a vegetable, as an individual, personal, living god would have to be. Nothing can exist and develop other than animal or vegetable life and yet poor, weak man has fashioned a god after his own image and has sought to hold the cause of all that is in the likeness of the only animal who will lie and swear falsely, sell votes, commit all manner of crime, go to war with deadly weapons, and practice meanness towards his fellows. Is not this a rather low estimate of what people deem to be the First Cause? Then why not cease this eternal claptrap about man-made, material gods? Let us drop the god or no god theory, the spiritual theory and the agnostic theory. Ingersoll declared he did not know, yet he might have known but for an indifference, probably caused by wealth, if he had only put

to serious work his power of right and reason. We all know that the man-god of the bible is an impossibility. Then let us leave all such to their fate and rise up in an earnest protest against this religious despotism and crowned political monarchy which kingcraft and its co-laborer, priestcraft, have tried for thousands of years to saddle upon us.

THE BLADE TERMED

A TRAITOR TO TRUTH.

Opposition From Church of Humanity to
Proposed Union of Forces with Materialist
Association.

(By W. H. Kerr.)

Five honest positions can be taken regarding the two great questions of the existence of God and of a continuation of life, but not by the same person at the same time. These are:—

- 1 Total ignorance of the subjects.
- 2 A firm belief in the existence of both.
- 3 A doubt of their existence.
- 4 A full knowledge of the non-existence of either one with a belief in, or a doubt of the other.
- 5 Full knowledge of the non-existence of both.

These are the practical and logical stages of progressing from total ignorance in early childhood of these subjects to perfect knowledge of them in the fifth position. Thousands of children do not live to be old enough to be taught idolatry and superstition. Nearly all that do get into the second position and stay there until they die. A small per cent get into the doubting stage. Some die there, the majority relapse into the second position.

(Continued on Page 13.)

Current Comment on Public Events

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

What is there about the Christian spirit that makes savages of men and women? Why is it that in spite of their continual protestations of love and kindness they still maintain an attitude of brutality? Did there ever exist any of the milk of human kindness in the breasts of the Christian people of Hunterdon, New Jersey, it must have soured and turned to clabber long ago. Although they will point with pride to the Apostle Paul and refer to the great triune taught by him, Faith, Hope and Charity, as the acme of human perfection, the Christians aforesaid are certainly short on their charity and rather long on their heartless indifference to human suffering. It may be that a long and continued association with the Jersey "yellowjackets" has jaundiced their human affections until they appear as walking advertisements of the yellow peril.

Recently the daily press has given publication to a news item under the startling and rather striking headlines,—"Church members want rope used" and by a reference to the article in question it is shown that a band of church members, of Hunterdon, in New Jersey, headed by Rev. C. S. Woodruff, who is said to be holding forth in Flemington, the same state, appeared before Governor Stickles and made a joint, vehement protest against further executive interference with the infliction of capital punishment upon one, John E. Schuyler, convicted of a capital offense and said to have been three times reprieved. That such conduct is almost without precedent is unquestioned, but coming at a time when the universal trend of public opinion is against the infliction of legal punishment in forms bordering upon brutality and inhumanity, it is somewhat astonishing that the followers of Calvary's Lamb, should be demanding that the rope be used in this particular case, presumably for the malicious pleasure of having a neck cracked under an edict of law.

Hanging has been a form of inflicting capital punishment in Christian countries for centuries. In times gone past it was imposed for the most trivial offenses. Under the Blackstonian and Benthamite regime during the common law period in England, the death penalty was inflicted in cases of forgery upon proven guilt. The idea was that forgery was so tempting and so easy of commission, that drastic measures were demanded for its suppression. From the growing humanity of the juries there came

a change in the law. Juries were unwilling to bring in a verdict of guilty where the punishment could only be death in such cases where the amount in controversy was trivial. The result was that innumerable forgeries went unpunished and that form of crime rapidly spread all over the country until the bankers and financiers petitioned the parliament to repeal the law and substitute lengthened terms of imprisonment in its stead. This had the desired effect for forgery soon showed signs of diminution. All this came about, however, through the promptings of a higher motivated humanity. Upon the same principle we might go further and assume that we have no moral right to pay another man, through legal forms, to do that which we would be ashamed to do ourselves.

Unless memory be in error the legislature of New Jersey has abolished death by hanging as a medium of inflicting the highest penalty and substituted the electric chair. If this be true, then in any event, this would be the last legal hanging in that state, and it appears that the citizens of that community wish to avoid the disgrace of having such a punishment imposed in their surroundings. But this is evidently unlike the Christian spirit. The latter demand that the hanging take place. There is no mercy, no forgiveness, no vicarious atonement, no pleading for a lost soul, but a firm and rigid insistence upon the fulfillment of a brutal law in order to gratify a base desire for revenge. Assuming that the murderer has repented of his act, then upon death, his soul will be jerked to glory instantaneously. In the course of time these same Christians who are now demanding the use of the rope, expect to reach the same destination, and we now wonder if these can dwell together in unity, peace and concord, upon meeting over there, for be it known that of such is the kingdom of heaven.

CANNED SERMONS A SPECIALTY.

Canned goods has been a rage in America. Every conceivable variety of food has been canned, placed upon the market and bought for home consumption. Fruits, vegetables, meats, cereals, in fact, everything that could be canned has been and immense profits have been realized. To a great extent industrial and commercial necessities have led to such measures and the prediction has been made that it is only a question of time before one or other of the big monopolistic combines will un-

dertake to can the elements and dispense them at so much per can. The latest innovation has been the phonograph whereby the sound of the human voice has been successfully canned and made to reproduce itself. This success has opened up a wide variety of possibilities. Could the phonograph have been in use during the days Jesus is said to have walked the earth and worked among the Jews, it would have been a great catch for him to have stood before a phonograph and repeated his sermon on the amount that the tone and manner of his voice could have been preserved for underneath posterity. But such was not the case. The invention was unknown to Jesus and his followers. Neither could foresee such a possibility. But there are means of recuperation at hand.

It is now reported that a score of pramaphone records have been made by musical artists in Paris; that these records have been solemnly placed in vacuum containers and as solemnly buried in the crypt of the Paris Opera House. Under the agreement by which they were made the containers are not to be opened until full one hundred years have elapsed when they are to be opened and the records thus made reproduced to a wondering people in the next century. Just imagine the extent to which this scheme could be carried out. If one of our most orthodox, mammon serving parsons could be induced to preach for one of these records and then turn it loose a century hence, the people would then be able to form an estimate of the value of Christian propaganda in this day and age and we can imagine the supreme contempt that would be displayed. Suppose Dr. Aked, the imported; Dr. Parkhurst, the rampant; or any of the time-serving parsons of the present could be induced to make one of these records for a century of preservation, what think ye the people of the next century would say concerning them? Suppose the Pope of Rome should read one of his encyclicals into it, what startling effect would it have on the generations to follow? Then the advertisement—"Canned sermons a specialty."

OUSTED BY PRAYER.

Prayer and faith may not be able to move mountains in spite of the contrary teaching and preaching, but according to the statement of Mrs. Henry Lewis, a resident of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, her god, that is the particular god she worships, has through her faith and prayer, removed a family of bugs from their residence in her nasal organ. Although the lady expresses her devotion and belief in the "Great Physician" it is not reported whether he has sent in his bill for fees as most physicians do. It is to be presumed that as

many earthly physicians fall in the collection of fees for services rendered, this Great Physician has personal experiences of a similar character. The new testament reports that when his son cured ten lepers only one returned to even thank him for the job and it is probable that the same proportion of gratified demonstration is manifested today.

The report states that Mrs. Lewis, while attending a revival service, had the misfortune to have a bug crawl up her nose. The most violent sneezing failed to dislodge it. The bug settled down and built a home from which a settlement sprang, eighty-six members, all told. Although the original bug was simply a squatter, with a prior claim to the territory having been established, the squatter refused to budge until he got good and ready to emigrate. Of course, it never occurred to the unfortunate woman that had she been giving her time and attention to her household duties and had missed that revival, the bug would never have got there in the first place. The original visitation and settlement was not looked upon, by Mrs. Lewis, as an act of god, but the divine afflatus is supposed to have so worked upon the mother bug, through prayer and faith, that she broke camp and carried off her progeny to other and more inviting parts. It may be that the original settler, the pioneer bug, had found that the accommodations were too cramped for any further increase of the colony and over-population created a necessity for emigration. In any event it was a case of claim-jumping with which the Lord had to be cailed in to settle the dispute. Mrs. Lewis claimed priority of right over the bugs regarding the claim in dispute and with the Lord on her side as special arbitrator she won out. The bugs might have stood Mrs. Lewis off had she contended alone, but no sooner did the Lord butt in than the settlers vamooseed and left Mrs. Lewis in undisputed possession.

We can express sympathy with any man or woman in distress but when the preposterous claim is made that the Lord had intervened to cause the uninvited bugs to vacate the premises, in that a writ of forcible entry and detainer would not have reached the controversy, the absurdity of religion and the follies it inculcates become subjects of ridicule.

SUCH A HOLINESS IT WAS!

A papal benediction, specially applied and administered, is usually a costly experiment and can only be had upon a large money payment. The ordinary merchant, ambitious, striving, reaching out for new business, will of a necessity indulge in a large amount of advertising. This method

is adopted to let the public know that the merchant has a certain line of goods to sell, and that he is anxious to dispose of them. At times great bargains are offered. The advertisement informs would-be purchasers of his line of goods that he is still doing business at the same old stand and acts, in a general way, as an invitation.

Turning over the recent accounts of the wedding of Miss Vanderbilt to the Hungarian Count with the sneezy name, it is extremely interesting to observe that Pope Pious X transmitted his apostolic benediction to the newly wedded pair, and that he also sent special word to them that he hoped that within a short time thereafter he would be able to impart his blessing to them at the vatican in person. It is also reported that the benediction was sent to New York from Rome, by cable, addressed to Archbishop Farley, who in turn transmitted it to Mgr. Lavelle, who performed the marriage ceremony and in turn delivered it to the contracting couple. Considering the several channels of holiness through which this benediction passed it should be possessed of greater power on the principle that the holiness gathered in volume as it went. The benediction might have been bad enough, but when Miss Vanderbilt had to buy a count along with it the personal incumbrances are sufficient to counterbalance the effect. At any rate Miss Gladys "took the count" with Mgr. Lavelle as officiating umpire and if we can judge by the past it will not be so long before she will "take the count" in some court of chancery with a judge thereof as referee.

But why should the papal benediction be so recklessly bestowed in this instance and denied to Bridget and Pat when they enter the marriage state? All are of the same clay, molded by the same divine hand, and all made in the image of deity. Ah! Friends! Behind it all lurks the secret longing for gold, that metal by which power is bought. Poor Bridget has none. Miss Vanderbilt has enough to furnish her no-account count with spending money for life. Rome also has an eye on it. A benediction is worth something, but when an invitation is extended to visit the Pope in person and receive a blessing at his hands, it means more cash for the church and his Holiness has one eye on the business end of the vatican. The new countess will get the blessing, for weal or woe. The pope will get the Vanderbilt cash for material as well as spiritual welfare. Both will be satisfied and happy. The Pope will continue to grant benedictions and blessings on a cash basis and Miss Vanderbilt shine in the Hungarian courts until her illegitimate lord has been able to buy himself a decent suit of underwear with her money and yet people wonder why it's so.

AN ORTHODOX GRAB GAME.

When a truly pious person is in trouble that trouble is carried to the Lord in prayer. When pious fakes get into a controversy they dare not trust to the Lord but prefer a court of law and human justice is made of higher regard than divine wisdom.

The congregation of the Christian church at Valley Junction, Ia., has accused their former pastor, Rev. L. W. McCray, of deliberate theft, in that they charge him with taking and carrying away from their jurisdictional care and scrutiny, one dining hall, and act held to be against the peace and dignity of the state. Understand the dining hall in controversy is of a public character and profits, in cash, are to be extracted therefrom. This is the cause of the dispute. The preacher avers that the hall belongs to him and that he had resigned his pastorate in order to run it admittedly for the sake of the profits realized therefrom. The preacher is reported to have operated it successfully and now the congregation, claiming him as their pastor, demands a divvy. The parson refuses to take them in on the deal and a new shuffle is demanded with some judge presiding over the game. One may suppose that like all church institutions of a similar character, the dining hall was a case of deliberate hold up, with malice aforethought, and with intent to overcharge. In the first place both preacher and congregation ought to have known better. It must have been an arrant humbug, a fact suggested by the statement that the dining hall was operated in conjunction with the Iowa State Fair, and known as the Wayside Inn. Of course the parson was onto his job. He did not wish to muster in as a parson and run a "wayside Inn" at the same time, hence his resignation, but he did expect the congregation to work for him. It appears that the congregation did labor and turned many of the fair visitors to the Inn which resulted in splendid profits but, alas and alack, the profits accruing from the enterprise went into the parson's pocket and then the congregation got mad and flew to the courts.

Gentle Reader! This quarrel is not over or concerning some lost soul, some one to be saved from the divine wrath to come, but over a few golden coins that each side expects to jingle for the glory of god and personal pleasures of the respective claimants. Why worship they not god instead of mammon?

The best way to get the Blade into more hands is to fill out that subscription blank and mail to us as directed.

BLUE GRASS BLADE

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Founded by Charles Chilton Moore in 1884 and edited by him until his death, February 7, 1906.

JAMES E. HUGHES.....Editor and Publisher
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ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Blade will be discontinued at the expiration of the term for which the subscription has been paid up in advance. The address slip on the paper will show subscribers the date of expiration of subscription. Back numbers, or numbers omitted will be sent, if asked for, upon renewal in case of discontinuance.

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Editorial**THE VALUE OF CRITICISM.**

That the Blade should be deemed a "traitor to truth" by reason of permitting the publication of ideas not in accord with its teaching, is a strange and startling proposition. The truth has nothing to fear from criticism. The truths of Freethought demand and invite criticism. Having extended the invitation and insisted upon the demand, it would be an act of cowardice to close the doors against discussion. It is impossible to secure honest discussion with the elements mentioned by the Blade's critics and having encouraged discussion and invited criticism, the Blade must and shall forever stand as an open forum wherein truth may be dissected and in the dissection its strength will be made manifest.

The Blade can sympathize with Mr. Kerr in his struggle to build up a society of free men and women, but that building can never be won nor

can the society flourish where narrow-mindedness prevails. Thought must not be imprisoned in an iron cage. Liberty demands that thought shall be as free as air and as universal as the morning dew. Claiming to be free, liberal and humanitarian, we violate those essential principles when we ruthlessly close our doors against those who differ with us and deny them the same privileges we enjoy and demand for ourselves. If orthodoxy is hidebound Freethought cannot be, else we belie the name.

Following the same line of conduct in the publication of this paper whereby we give space to Mr. Kerr's criticism, though manifestly unjust, the Blade, conscious of its integrity to truth, has published articles upon subjects of economics with which its editor does not agree, but that disagreement does not lead the editor into that great error of ruling against the cause because he does not advocate it in person. If there is any intelligent Christian in the wide world, who can write an interesting article on his belief, sincerely believing that we are wrong and he is right, our columns are open to him, we, of course, reserving the right to criticize what he has to say, and our readers have access to make reply to him.

This is the Blade's policy and it expects to adhere rigidly thereto no matter the criticism. It is not adverse to criticism. On the contrary it welcomes all honest criticism. On this ground Mr. Kerr's criticism is welcomed. The Blade is not perfect. We know this. Honest criticism may induce improvement, if not, the criticism would be useless. The Blade does not complain because it has been criticised in that it fully realizes the impossibility of agreement upon all questions. Viewed in this light the Blade can see no valid reason or excuse why its policy should be changed to the exclusion of all matter that does not comport with the principal object of its teaching and mission.

The more criticism we have the better for these expose our faults where the praise of our friends spur us along certain and definite lines.

The Blade was gratified to notice that one of its recent editorials on the subject of nothing being necessary as a substitute for Christianity, was reproduced, with credit, in the London Freethinker. Being the most progressive up-to-date Freethought publication in the civilized world. The Blade also considers it an honor at the recognition accorded. Such manifesta-

tions of approval are always encouraging, especially to one who was compelled by necessity, to assume such a burden as that of editing a Freethought publication.

* * * *

THE MATERIALISTIC**CONTROVERSY.**

The discussion that is now going on between the Secretary of the Materialist's Association, her friends and critics, is assuming quite an interesting phase, as bringing into the crucible of thought the different names and appellations used by men to designate particular forms of religious belief or disbeliefs, vivisectioning them as it were, and by comparison to make their value and meaning, each with the other, more clear.

All this controversy rages around and about the god-idea. From the ignorant and superstitious past men have held and taught various conflicting notions concerning god that out of such a confused mass of thought it is almost an impossibility to extract any clear idea. It is undoubtedly true that polytheism was the original conception of a god-governed universe. Different natural phenomena were believed to be controlled by a different set of deities. The ancients could not harmonize the thought of a good and wise deity dispensing suffering and torture and these were attributed to bad deities. Not until centuries had passed away did Monotheism set in, and this notion held and taught by Judaism did not satisfy the Christian believer and the latter invented three gods and became a worshipper at the Trinitarian shrine.

Upon this subject Freethinkers hold diverse views. The extremes, if they may be termed such are found in Agnosticism and Atheism. The former is an avowal of having no knowledge on the subject, a position assumed by many brilliant minds but the more daring go even further, and while refusing to deny god, lacking the knowledge necessary to justify such a denial, simply announce an opposition to Theism, whatever it is and in all its forms, and this is Atheism. For years the Atheist stood upon that ground, but it remained for Hugh O. Pentecost, of New York, to make an open, public declaration of a denial of god, on the ground that as the Theist was unable to prove god, and that which was incapable of proof was really unproven, he had a right to deny until such proof was offered that would satisfy the inquiring mind. Modern schools of thought are in-

clined to accept the Pentecost position and assert that without proof god does not exist.

The Atheist simply stands in a negative attitude. He regards the world of phenomena as being sufficient unto itself and does not see the necessity of referring to an underlying and all-comprehensive unity. To this critical mind nothing can possibly have an ultimate origin or destiny. An admission that any ultimate existed at either end must necessarily imply design and the Atheist can perceive no design. A close study of natural phenomena fails to reveal any dramatic tendency in the succession of events and there is no reasonableness in the universe of matter save that with which human fancy has unwarrantably endowed it. And yet in all this infinite diversity the Atheist can perceive order and precision, whereby like causes will produce like events, but he reasons that it is so because it could not be otherwise and this immutability is the bed rock of modern science.

One of the insurmountable difficulties that confronts the Theist is his inability to describe or explain his deity and to bring within human understanding and conception what he means by god. With the ignorant and uneducated the god theory is presented in legendary form wherein the deity is accorded human attributes and passions, and when narrowed down to its final analysis this is the only idea of an intelligent deity for all other notions presented or obtainable are too vague to have any value so far as an honest investigation is concerned. For this reason all attempts to study god, to seek god and to find god out from the workings of the physical universe, have met with repeated discouragement and at last the idea of god completely "ritters away and is reduced to an empty abstraction.

We are justified, by fact, in the inference, that every known idea and every conceivable theory of god existing in the mind of man today, properly denominated as orthodox, have been acquired by inheritance and not by investigation. Persons holding these bequests look with dread and misgivings upon any study of the question. Confront them with a fact which seems to contradict their ideas of the god theory and they will at once question the fact and refuse to investigate their theory. Wedded to the old notions they quickly sound the alarm and honest investigation is denied even intellectual toleration. These live in perpetual dread of the

dawn of that day when science shall forever banish god from the world but in spite of this feeling each forward step compels a retreat upon the orthodox lines and thinking man is compelled to contemplate the universe from another and different point of view.

We are told that "the fool hath said in his heart there is no god" but greater fool is he who would assert god and yet unable to offer one iota of proof thereof.

Then after all we are driven to Atheism, or Materialism as the only rational explanation of the universe thus offered. Never in all the world's great history has knowledge made such a rapid growth as during the past century. Men's minds are becoming more susceptible to truth, the orthodox resistance to innovation is weakening and intellectual demands are still multiplying.

PUSHING AND PULLING.

"Push" and "Pull."

Did you ever face a swing door with the above posted on either side?

They are extremes and their workings are exactly in the opposite direction.

Men are governed by much the same conditions. Those who expect to court success through a "pull" have a splendid chance to die disappointed. The men who use "push" to get there stand a better chance to win and very often reach the desired goal.

To which category do you belong? Are you "pulling" or "pushing?"

Pause for a moment in front of that door. The word "pull" stares at you. The door has temporarily arrest your progress. Your road lies through it and beyond it. To pull causes you to halt and so much of your time has been lost. Now take the other side under similar conditions and desires. As you approach the door you observe the word "push" and you put forth the necessary force to open it and walk right on without hesitation or halting.

Did you ever go through such an experience? If you have you can understand what is meant by the processes above described. Pushing hurts nobody but it is a mighty help. Pulling is as apt to retard as it is to assist. There are lots of people in this world who expect to get through it on their "pull." The larger and preponderant portion of them fail. In other words, they never get there. The man who uses "push" and relies

upon his own vigor and energy usually makes a mark and rises to a position of importance to his fellows. The pushing man is the strong man to whom the weaker ones will look in times of trouble and emergency. The pulling man is a mental and physical cripple who is waiting for somebody to do something for him.

Suppose that swing door represents opportunity! Now what are you going to do? Stand waiting for a pull? No none of that. Get busy and push it open and pass through without halting or hesitation.

If Freethinkers are ever to win a decisive battle in their great fight against organized superstition they have to get busy and push. To stand, Micawber-like, waiting for something to turn up in the shape of a pull means irretrievable loss and ruin.

IN MEMORIAM.

Two years ago, or on the 7th day of February 1906, the founder and editor of this paper passed away and today there are thousands who mourn the loss of Charles Chilton Moore.

His death was a serious blow to the Blade. Many of his friends doubted if it could survive the death of that gallant captain, who had stood at its helm through stress and storm, in fair weather and foul, and to be candid, while determined to do the best we could, we had misgivings in the same direction. Its appearance today and its steadily increasing associations suggests that the storm and season of doubt has safely passed over and the Blade will soon be out of the troubled waters.

During the two years of our editorship we have been constantly reminded of our shortcomings as compared with the greatness of him who gave the Blade its existence. It has been one of the ambitions entertained that we make the Blade a perpetual monument to his memory. And yet, just as the course has been fraught with danger and toil we can view the future with a greater complacency, we can contemplate it with greater and brighter hopes in that the experience gained has been profitable in many ways.

It is with a profound reverence and a feeling of love and respect to Charles Chilton Moore that we pen these few lines to his name and memory, demonstrating to those who, with us, gave him their love, that although he is gone he is not forgotten.

BLASPHEMY IN ENGLAND.

The Blade extends its hearty congratulations to G. W. Foote, and the National Secular Society, of England, of which he is President, upon the substantial results achieved by him in his defense of Mr. Boulter, of London, who had been arrested and indicted for blasphemy.

In the issue of the Freethinker of January 19, Mr. Foote gives a partial history of the proceedings obtained to the time of publication, and one gratifying change produced is that the purpose of the prosecution to try its victim behind closed doors, a sort of Star Chamber proceeding, in order to fool and deceive the public, has been knocked into a cocked hat through the friendly offices of Mr. Foote and the trial must now be had in open court and in public. The specious and hypocritical pretense had been made that the "information" was unfit to be read in open court, whereas, upon investigation, the revelation was made that it was a charge of blasphemy, nothing even indicative of obscenity appearing in any portion of the instrument. Thus the shallowness and hypocrisy of the prosecution was exposed and Mr. Foote scored a signal triumph.

We presume that by this writing further proceedings have been had in the case. The trial was put off until February, no date mentioned in the Freethinker, and the daily press of London have broke through the conspiracy of silence as to make caustic comment upon the case. It is reported that the prosecution sought to deny Mr. Foote admission to the court room while the preliminary examination was in progress, on the ground that he was a part of that very interesting public which had been so kindly and considerately "excluded" but he insisted that as the representatives of the press were permitted to remain, he, as editor and representative of the Freethinker, also had a right to be present, and in spite of authority and objection Mr. Foote courageously forced his presence upon them. This was fortunate for Mr. Boulter in that Mr. Foote's presence and his energetic watchfulness, caused the prosecution to suddenly reverse its tactics and prospects now look brighter for this latest victim of a fanatical religious system. Let us express the hope that Mr. Foote will secure the liberty of his protege and drive another nail in the coffin of religious tyranny.

Under the same blasphemy laws Mr.

Foote spent one year in prison because of a pictorial publication in the Freethinker. His incarceration could have been avoided had Mr. Foote sought simply his personal liberty, but realizing the eternal principle at stake, he declined to accept liberty on such an issue. His colleague, Charles Bradlaugh, was also prosecuted on the same charge, but he fought the whole prosecution, and almost single handed, without scarcely a cent in his pocket, defeated them and was never convicted. Richard Carlile spent nearly ten years in prison for the liberty of the press, and now Mr. Foote, with no personal feeling in the case, interested only in that great principle of liberty, the heritage of all mankind, has taken hold of this present prosecution in such a manner as to make the bigots quail.

The Blade has gone through similar experiences. Its previous editor spent six months in prison, as part of a two-year sentence, by a pious judge, and was released through the clemency of the late President McKinley. Its present editor was then its publisher, and was prosecuted along with editor Moore, escaping with the imposition of a fine, which had to be paid. Because of these experiences, because of the past history of Freethought, both in England and America, the Blade wishes the greatest possible success to Mr. Foote, and his colleagues, in the present undertaking in behalf of Mr. Boulter.

No time should be wasted, no effort should be spared no energy dissipated, that is calculated to disarm the Christian superstition of its power over the human mind and every agency struggling to that end should be brought to work along parallel lines.

* * * *

COMFORT TO A DYING FAITH.

"What must we do to be saved?"

The question reputed to have been put to Jesus now nearly two thousand years ago is being propounded today by advocates of Christianity, to each other, and small satisfaction is to be found in any of the answers made.

Unable to detect the one efficient cause of the decline of Christianity, and unwilling to look a bald truth in the face, they invent devious excuses for exasperating conditions and exist upon a mere hope that the future may furnish the problem they have vainly sought. Every religious leader can see the result but they are unwilling to admit the cause.

Confronted by empty pews and a

falling off in church membership, these blind leaders of mental cripples profess to find consolation in the belief that they do not suggest a decadence in orthodox beliefs and that those who claim to see a weakening of church power over the people are indulging in needless alarm. But, still the fact remains that the masses remain mute and indifferent to the solemn appeals of the church bells, and as a rule, most preachers discourse to empty pews every Sunday.

If we contrast these conditions with those of a century ago the public indifference towards the present church power becomes more definitely marked. Many are living today who can remember the crowding of the old family pews, the long and uninteresting sermon, the strict way in which Sunday was devoted to bible reading, to the singing of psalms and hymns, the extreme religious torture and orthodox gloom that prevailed on Sunday. Such minds cannot help being impressed with the transitional nature of our time. The man or woman who does not go to church on Sunday is no longer looked upon with scorn. A ramble through fragrant fields has supplanted the stealthy tread upon the carpeted aisles, and the song of the rippling waters furnishes a stronger attraction than the monotone of the drawling sermonizer. Brighter and happier thoughts are occasioned by a glance at Nature's coloring than by gazing upon windows of stained glass. In the old days nearly every one attended church, partly from personal desire, partly from fear, and partly from tradition. It was not altogether principle that controlled them. There were many, even in those days, who would liked to have broken through the orthodox restraints, but dared not. They dreaded the condemnation of their neighbors and the denunciations of the pulpit, even more than they feared the wrath of God. But what a change. The transformation is complete. The parson is no longer the dictator. He is now a persistent suppliant. The triumph of the people over priestcraft has wrought an attitude of intelligent indifference towards the ghosts of orthodox beliefs.

In order to arrest the speedy decline of the church speedy remedies are suggested. The Presbyterians propose to inaugurate a hunt for the sheep who have strayed away from the fold. Realizing the futility of any further effort upon the masses outside, future energies are to be directed towards protecting these already in the corral to pre-

vent them getting away. In other words, this sect proposes to strengthen itself from within rather than from without which is a practical surrender of the entire position. Missionary effort has failed. The art of proselyting has not proven a success. From a campaign of offensive aggression they turn to a natural defense of those supports they have already got. These are to be kept closely housed up in the stove-warmth of the church and not permitted to sniff the bracing morning air. This is the last stand of militant orthodoxy, but in the repression hinted at its inherent weakness is exposed.

From another viewpoint, the Homilectic Review of New York, professes to find a satisfaction in the belief that this loss is not a vital one to the church and that the indifference of the masses is amply compensated for by the steadfast faith and meaning of those who do attend.

Poor consolation, no doubt, when the great boast of Christendom has been in the number of its followers, and yet Freethought is willing to accord these few crumbs of comfort to console it in its dying days.

All of our readers have been afforded an ample opportunity to judge of the Blade in its new dress and under its new arrangement. Many have written to us concerning it. These are good signs as they show an interest in its welfare. This interest ought to be catching for the more universal it becomes the more successfully can the slumbering elements of Freethought be roused to greater and more useful activity.

BLADE PUBLICATIONS.

We desire to direct the attention of our readers to the Blade Publications, advertisements of which appear elsewhere in the paper. In addition to these we purpose, from time to time, to utilize any good article appearing in the columns of the Blade for missionary work and will cause a number of leaflets to be printed for distribution which may be had at the actual cost of publishing the same. This we take it is a splendid work as it furnishes many with an argument which they might not be able to offer otherwise.

Dr. Wilson's Trip to Rome ought to have an extensive circulation and should not be confined to Freethought readers. A copy of this book placed in the hands of a Christian believer who is inclined to think will go far toward convincing him of the fallacies

of his religious claims and pretensions. Add to this a copy of Dog Fennel in the Orient and the preposterous claims made in behalf of Palestine and the so-called Holy Lands, will be absolutely exploded. These books may be bought for \$1.25 each, or if a copy of each is bought at the same time we will send them to any address in the United States and Canada for \$2.25 post paid.

As offering a cheaper way of reaching orthodoxy we refer you to The Virgin Mary and The Sacrament, both by M. Grier Kidder, which are sold for 10 cents each, or twelve copies for \$1.00. There is a sure enough laugh at every reading of these vigorous pamphlets.

In a recent magazine comment was made upon the increasing number of enlistments in the army and navy. The writer pointed to these as favorable signs of growth and development. To our mind they are evidences of disease, as much so as priestcraft. Both priests and soldiers are destructionists. The one kills the mind and the other kills the body. The one makes for mental stagnation, the other for physical mutilation. Civilization demands that both shall be eradicated. Both are Old Men of the Sea entwined about the neck of the Social Sinbad.

Every new truth is an obstacle in superstition's path, and finding lodgment in a fertile mind or brain makes stronger for intellectual freedom. The Blade works for that glorious consummation. It may not accomplish much, but it will continue to do its best. Our suggestion is that you strive to get the Blade into the hands of as many of your friends as possible.

Orthodox misery comes from a miserable orthodoxy.

Is it not a suggestive fact that all monarchs are seriously pious?

The materiality of the orthodox heaven and hell is proven by the fact that the conditions of both are climatic.

Don't you think this is a good time to get your neighbors and friends to subscribe for the Blade?

Every time a preacher passes the hat and takes up a collection as a consideration for pretending to save souls from eternal wrath he knows he is guilty of fraudulent pretense.

Why should a future life be the sole desire of man? The mere thought of meeting again after death could never console for the loss of a dear friend now. We want our friends now. We want them with us just as they are and just as we have learned to love them. There can be no great joy in the belief that some time, in the hereafter, we may meet with only a part of our friends, under different conditions and circumstances. If the life to come is unlike the life that is and our friends are not to be the same as they are now, there is small consolation in the Christian dream of immortality.

The god-idea is merely a savage concept and has never served a really useful purpose. It has been utilized as a means of trading upon the fears and passions of mankind to the profit of some and to the detriment of many. Ere long it will pass away as a fiction of man's mental babyhood. The universe will then appear to man as it is unpeopled by ghosts and goblins. Every new fact displaces god. Such a creation is not essential in any part of the economy of Nature.

We wish to let our readers know that W. H. Cox, of Marietta, Ohio, was the author of that Paine poem published in the issue dedicated to the memory of that sterling patriot. We had unintentionally omitted his name therefrom.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

To-Morrow, Chicago, Ill.
Truthseeker, New York City.
Sunflower, Hamburg, N. Y.
The Clarion, London, Eng.
The Freethinker, London, Eng.
Richard H. Meniffee, by John W. Townsend.
The Red Flag, Abbeville, La.
Magical Moses, by Ernest Paek, Bradford, Eng.
Demi-Gods, Demi-Damned, by Malfew Seklew, Bradford, Eng.
People's Press, Chicago, Ill.
Journal of Man, Chicago, Ill.
Universalist Herald, Canon, Ga.
The Truth About God, Great Bend, Kansas.
Holeombe Journal, Holeombe, Wis.
Press, Cleveland, Ohio.
Here and Now, Kansas City, Mo.
Literary Digest, New York.
Appeal to Reason, Girard, Kansas.
Daily Journal, Marietta, O.
True Word, Bryn Mawr, Wash.

Pope as a Poet of Freethought

An Essay on the Immortal Lyric With Extracts to show Attitude of Pope's Mind Concerning Nature and Nature's Laws.

(By John F. Clarke.)

Alexander Pope, born in 1688, was born to a life of misery, to himself, and pleasure to others. A mortal malformation and an immortal genius. In the "Memoir of Pope," as given in my "Pope," it is said that Pope was a nominal Roman Catholic. Phenomenally infinitesimal is any trace of adherence in his works. "By their fruits shall ye know them."

Judging by Pope's "fruit," I shall say that he was a Deist with a small "d." In his essay on man, he starts off with this anomalous statement:—

"Say first, of God above or Man below. What can we reason by from what we know?"

There is much more sarcasm than of orthodoxy in this:—

"Hope numbly then; with trembling pinions soar,

Wait the great teacher death; and God above. What future bliss, He gives not thee to know, But gives that nope to be thy blessing now.

No, springs eternal in the human heart: Man never is, but always to be blest. The soul, uneasy and confined from home, Rests and expiates in a life to come."

The fine irony of Pope is seen in this: "Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust; If man alone engross not Heaven's high care; Alone made perfect here, immortal there; Snatch from His hands the balance and the rod, Re-judge His justice, be the god of God. In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies; All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies, Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, Men would be angels, angels would be gods, Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell, Aspiring to be angels, men rebel; And who but wishes to invest the laws Of Order, sins against the Eternal Cause."

The Materialistic and the spiritualistic see-saw all through this poem.

"But errs not Nature from this gracious end, From burning suns when livid deaths descend. When earthquakes swallow, or when tempest sweeps

Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?

No ('tis replied), the first Almighty Cause Acts not by partial, but by general laws; The exceptions few; some change since all began;

And what created perfect? Why then Man? If the great end be human happiness, Then nature deviates; and can man do less?

. . . .

"If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design,

Why then a Borgia or a Cataline?

Who know but He, whose hand the lightning forms,

Who leaves old ocean, and who wings the storms;

Pours fierce Ambition in a Caesar's mind Or turns young Ammon loose and scourge mankind?

From pride, from pride, our very reasoning springs;

Account for moral, as well as natural things: Why charge we Heaven in those, in these acquit!

In both to reason right is to submit."

"All are parts of one stupendous whole, Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

. . . .

All nature is but art, unknown to thee; All chance, direction, which thou canst see. All discord, having not understood; All partial evil universal good; And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite, One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right."

All this shows that Pope was a Deist, and there is no trace of Christ in the "Essay on Man." As Deists are not persecutors of men, we can admire the Deist, although we do not fall in with his conclusions. If Pope had lived until our day, he would have known a few things that he did not know, and although he could have seen evidence of planets being thrown out of orbit without the whole chain being broken, and he would have found in evolution, something beyond pride.

Could he come back to-day, he would have to revise his argument. As a literary masterpiece, The Essay, stands high. As a metaphysical argument, it was sublime in Pope's time. Pope was as far in advance of his time as Voltaire was in his, or Ingersoll in his. He gave us the best that his honest thought could produce. Atheism was just beginning to let itself be heard in quiet corners. Pope's environment did not allow of disbelief in God. As a Catholic in early youth, I suppose that he made supplication to Mary and her Son, for alleviation of pain and did not get any response. Therefore, he ignored them in his metaphysical works. His philosophy of submission to Nature, was what the French call a "dénier resort" or the last pin in the cushion, and was "durn near" all that he could do. He had been taught the

necessity of worshipping something and he called Nature God. He set up his altar to Nature and poured forth his pretty prayers. He pretended to see purpose in earthquakes, but did he see any real purpose in a brilliant mind, wedded to a wretched body?

Pope was a genius, and has an enviable reputation as a poet and logician. It is idle for the Catholic Church to claim him, when that church is afraid to read his argument in public. As a ritual, the "Essays on Man," has any mass or sermon, ever delivered in that church, beaten a mile and several laps.

The Protestant churches are also afraid of Pope in the Pulpit, although they are ready enough to use him in attempted confutation with an Atheist.

If the full-fledged Catholics were as clear and forceful as this nominal Catholic, Catholicism would be as Hyperion was to a Satyr.

Pope was a freethinker. If only all men were such.

Crapsey-Mangassarian Debate

Result of the Great Forensic Battle on the Historical Personality of Jesus as Viewed by a Blade Writer.

(By Harriet M. Cloz.)

On the evening of January 21, a great throng of people assembled in Orchestra Hall, Chicago, to listen to the Crapsey—Mangassarian debate. The subject was "Resolved that Jesus is an historical person," with Dr. Crapsey, Affirmative, Mr. Mangassarian, Negative.

Several city reporters wrote diligently, as though a verbatim account were being made, but the morning papers contained only a few paragraphs of the controversy. Evidently the momentous question of Eternal Joy or everlasting damnation of the human race—which must rest upon the proof or disproof of whether Jesus lived—does not seem to very strongly impress the Chicago publishers, and as no vote was taken to decide the case, I fear the pit of perdition still yawns for the credulous but unregenerated Christian.

Dr. Algernon Crapsey of Rochester, N. Y. will be remembered by Blade readers as the Episcopal minister who was tried for heresy because he rejected the miracles and denied the truth of the immaculate conception.

The Doctor stated in his opening address that he had spent 30 years in the study of the Bible and history and that to him, Jesus was as clear in history as Caesar, Socrates or Alexander. That he was as well defined in the gospel of Mark as the bones of the Mastodon in the earth. He, however, made the mistake of seeking to prove his contention by citing only bible evidence and stated that the great fact that Christianity

was established and grew to such proportions and stood for so much good in the world, was evidence to him of the historic personality of its originator, (who by the way was Paul instead of Jesus).

What bearing the peculiarities of a person can have upon the proof of historical integrity, I do not know, but Dr. Crapsey gave us quite an extended delineation of the habits and methods of Jesus. He said John the Baptist knew "things," but Jesus knew "men and motives." It is quite refreshing to be informed that at least, John the Baptist knew a few things. I hope he was not afflicted with the modern mania of knowing things that are not true. Jesus was described as a man of moods;—as at one time the impersonation of humility and again asserting his kingship, which showed said Dr. Crapsey, he felt himself especially favored of god, though such favor did not exempt him from the very human propensity of anger and denunciation.

If one is to judge from the hisses which greeted the opening remarks of Mr. Mangassarian we would say that the latter characteristics have been transmitted to present day disciples of the Nazarene. Taking up separately the references made by his opponent, Mr. Mangassarian leader of the Independent Religious Society of Chicago, showed that the gospels are not reliable, not being written by eye witnesses—or written anonymously undated and some without beginning or ending. He reminded Dr. Crapsey that he (Crapsey) himself had stated that "the gospel of John" was undoubtedly "the least reliable of any."

The London Spectator was quoted as saying that—"all we have been taught of Christianity is practically disproved. The gospels do not tell what Jesus said and Paul did not know or see him and no mention is made, in the 13 epistles, of Jesus Christ."

Barnabas, one of the books suppressed by the church, denied that Jesus was crucified and the Gnostic Sects (contemporaries) deny that Jesus lived or died.

It was shown by reliable historical quotation that the references to Jesus by Josephus are fraudulent and that forgeries innumerable were committed to bolster the institution of Christianity and such act was considered to be a pious one, and Dr. Giles states that many books were written for no other purpose.

Many references were cited to show that Christ was an idea, a myth, a figment of the brain, likewise Jesus.

Returning to the fray, Dr. Crapsey admitted that Christ is but an idea and said his opponent confused Jesus the historical person with Christ the myth. He also admitted that from 75 to 400 years intervened between the alleged time of Jesus and the writing of the accounts of his life, also that there was a great amount of traditional matter that had

been inserted but still claimed that there was the residuum of truth. He said that unhistorical matter did not discredit historical facts and that anyway the authorship of the gospels was not germane to the discussion. He frankly said that there was much in the New Testament that was not historical and that anonymous authorship was a common custom, as well as the attachment by the author of a great name to his manuscript and while he thought it was not a good habit it had to be accepted.

Referring to Paul's silence regarding Jesus the Doctor said he either did not know of him or did not consider it necessary to mention him.

The crucifixion was dwelt upon as proving that all great reformers are martyrs and while Dr. Crapsey repudiates the miracles he clings to the statement that the great fact of Christianity and its growth and work through the age, is proof that Jesus was an historical person.

Replying, Mr. Mangasarian again reminded his opponent that there was no reference to Jesus except in the documents which Dr. Crapsey discredits and as no other reliable witness had been quoted he could not see that Jesus was proved to be an historical person.

Referring to the great good claimed to have been done by Christianity, Mr. Mangasarian asserted that all acts of goodness had been forced by the powers outside of it; that it never was just, except under compulsion and cited the great Christian Monarch of Russia as a typical example and with tragic gesture and intonation he continued. "What has Christianity done for my opponent? Why, after 30 years of toil in the church its minions showed their gratitude in taking him by the collar and kicking him out of their presence because he dared to harbor a human idea or think for himself. How many good deeds would it be necessary for Christianity to perform to offset the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition which it inspired? What good can the system do that could parallel the mighty massacre of St. Bartholomew?"

What good can the religion of Jesus Christ accomplish to compensate for the desolation of homes for the torture of unbelievers, for the wars of invasion, for the filling of dungeons, for the destruction of sciences and the burning of libraries?"

Ah! we can never recover from the thousands and years of night precipitated by Christian rule.

"I have one objection to this claim of Christianity," continued Mr. Mangasarian, "and that is that it is not true and not until it is overthrown will we swing toward truth and justice." I have here given but an indistinct idea of the interest of this debate which the prominence of the speakers insured, and the fact that it occurred disproves the contention of so many that the Bible and church

teachings need give little concern and that they will finally fall of their own weight. I, however, believe in hurrying the fall by a good hard body blow at every opportunity. If effort will accomplish in ten years that which would require one hundred through natural process of disintegration, let us continue the effort and utilize the ninety remaining years in the erection of the mile-marks of wisdom, in cultivating the charitable conscience and in cutting loose the dragging anchor of love and liberty.

THE BLADE TERMED

A TRAITOR TO TRUTH.

(Continued from Page 5.)

ond stage and the balance advance to the fourth stage where they have established and maintain a small foot-hold. A very few have struggled on to the fifth position where they are now making heroic effort to establish a permanent foot-hold under the name Church of Humanity. The problems for them to solve is to get a firm, organized hold on their position and then throw out a strong educational line to all other positions to help the people up. That line must reach to the first position and take the children direct to the fifth position without stopping at the intermediate stations. Stations numbered 3 and 4 can then be eliminated. The educational contest must be between 5 and 2 for the possession of those of station 1 which is the world's receiving station. This contest must continue until one of the parties is vanquished. Station 2 has practically all the machinery of organized society and gets first possession of the children. It holds the most of them and wins back most of those who stray away to the other stations. If a federation of the various factions in it on fundamentals is accomplished for political power against station 5 it can be easily destroyed. Those of the other stations would side with 2 against 5.

By joining the Materialist Association you claim to have advanced to 5. I want to ask you if it is sensible to furnish aid to 2, 3 and 4 against 5 as you are doing by giving them free space to fight your own teachers. By doing so you are a traitor to the truths you claim to know and to your own comrades. How can you hope to win recruits for 5 by allowing 2, 3 and 4 to fight it through your own publication? Do not the thousands of teachers, societies and publications devoted to errors have enough influence against 5 without you turning traitor to aid them?

Some of my comrades joined the Materialist Association and they would like to see a union of the societies. But if your teachers are going to put in their time fighting each other and give the use of their publications to those who do not know the truths the Materialist Association teaches to fight its teachers I shall oppose a union to the last.

The Blade's Correspondence

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OMER T. GLENN—Many thanks for your bountiful contribution. A few more like unto yourself, and only a few, would soon make our path a rosy one. Will consider the suggested symposium.

JAMES GRAY—The postal laws will not permit what you ask but we have caused two copies to be mailed you each week. While you have had just cause for complaint it will not be likely to occur again.

CHARLES R. KIMBERLY—You are a lucky man. If you are not content now give up trying. We appreciate your kind words and promised help. We also wish yourself and wife abundant happiness.

JOSEPH HAIGH—We have received the book, gave brief attention to it but will fix up what you ask for in the course of a week or two.

J. H. SCHWARTZ—Glad you are pleased with the Blade. Story has been received and will appear in a subsequent issue. Many thanks. Rush on those other matters.

A. J. PAGAN—Received letter and reply has been made in this issue. Thanks for your interest. Write us again.

N. W. MARTIN—The Blade is still doing business at the same old stand and sample copies have been mailed to you. If you have not found what you want address Peter Eckler, Vesey Street, New York City.

PETER BIMELE—Paper and letter also received. Comment has been made, as per your suggestion. We hope you will appreciate the effort.

W. H. COX—Sample copies have been sent. For your pleasure as well as for ourselves we wish you good luck.

J. W. BOWMAN—Keep digging. There's a turn in every tide. Thanks for your kind words upon the improved appearance of the Blade.

HERBERT TURNER—Thanks for clippings. Will send sample copies as you have advised.

JACOB GAY—We had expected to strike

connection with the magazine form of the Blade. You are real fortunate in having the services of John R. Charlesworth, and I must congratulate you on your ability to retain him. I shall try to send you a club of subscribers soon. The Blade now undoubtedly is cheap at the price. Long may it continue to clip off the heads of all serpents that get in its way either by accident or boldness. Let them keep out of the Blue Grass.

Yours for the continued success of C. C. Moore's paper, and may his widow and his offspring ever be proud of it.

CHAS. R. KIMBERLY.

Wants An Extra Copy.

Hillsboro, Oregon.

Editor Blade:—

I wish to know if I can get by paying for it two copies of the Blade every time in place of one not separately but rolled up together and if there will be any extra cost to that plan?

I want to send a paper to my neighbors and friends sometimes. I am ready to send \$1.50 more as soon as I know it.

JAMES GRAY.

a popular chord by giving portraits of Freethinkers. This is an added expense but we propose to keep it up as long as we can, or until the store of subjects has been exhausted.

CORRESPONDENCE.

How He Enjoys The Blade.

Marshall, Ill.

Editor Blade:—

Just at hand Blade in New suit clothes, neat and trim. Like idea of photographs of Freethinkers. Have often wondered why we could not get a look at some of them.

J. H. SCHWARTZ.

More Congratulations.

Circleville, Ohio.

Editor Blade:—

You have certainly improved the Blue Grass Blade very much in appearance, and the first issue is almost free from omissions and typographical errors. A continuation of such carefulness ought to win many new subscribers, especially in

See Editorial Columns.

Highland, Ill.

Editor Blade:—

Will you kindly answer in the next issue of the Blade "the following questions." Can a freethinker advocate Prohibition? Wishing a big success to the Blade, I am

AUG. J. PAGAN.

Shows His Faith In Us.

Cincinnati, Ohio.

Editor Blade:—

Enclosed please find postal money order for thirty dollars. I hope you may have plain sailing for the Blade henceforward. Will not Kidder contribute an occasional article? I would like to have his pamphlet that you advertise. (The Virgin Mary.) I had it, several years ago, but don't know just where to look for it, at present. We had to give up our Paine meeting for several reasons, one of which was, that we did not go about the business soon enough.

Dr. Wilson thinks that we shall be able to get up a big affair for January 29, 1909.

I wish you would publish (sometime this month), the enclosed from the London Academy. I doubt if the author was, in reality, half-way orthodox. He doubtless found that he could convey his meaning more promptly by the use of orthodox expression. The little poem appeared in the London Academy several years ago.

I have been thinking that possibly a Symposium on the question of "Immortality is it desirable, and how can any one prove that it would, or could be a state of uninterrupted happiness," might prove a success. But it may be a good plan to wait awhile, say until the week after presidential election.

Yours as ever,

OMER T. GLENN.

An Old Timer.

Olney, Mont.

Editor Blade:—

Will you please let me know if you are still publishing the Blue Grass Blade and the subscription price, also if you can furnish the apocryphal part of the scripture that went in the waste basket?

N. W. MARTIN.

See Current Comment.

Zoar, Ohio.

Editor Blade:—

Under separate cover I sent you copy of the Cleveland Press containing an account of the famous Vanderbilt wedding where the infallible Pope has wired the apostolic benediction—for a slice of their millions of course.

I wish some good Blade writer like Wilson, or Charlesworth would take up this matter and give the readers a real good article about it. I do not consider myself able, nor do I have the time.

With my best wishes will I close,
PETER BIMELEK.

The Doom of Dogma.

Marietta, Ohio.

Editor Blade:—

Have been waiting to receive copy of the Paine memorial issue of the Blade. Hope you have not overlooked me. Will start to work on club as soon as I can after receipt of paper. I shall send you a copy of one of our daily papers that contains the address of the Rev. E. A. Coll, the Unitarian, who delivered the main address at the Paine memorial held here on the 9th. This shows how the tide is turning in our country. Fifteen years ago a man would have been scoffed and scorned at, had he got up before a large audience and expressed himself on Paine, as did Mr. Coll and I expect to see in the next fifteen years every clergyman in our city, as liberal on this subject as he. He is only a few years in advance of them, that's all. Two weeks ago last Sunday, I attended the Congregational church and heard the pastor admit that the whole orthodox church was going to pieces, like a disabled ship in heavy gale, and the church had to do something heroic to save herself from utter destruction. "Yea" they see the handwriting on the wall. It is only a question of time with them and they know it, and they are doing all in their power to hold the old rotten hulk up. But she is sinking. She has sprung a leak at every seam. She is fast filling and is bound to go to the bottom, and the sooner she does the better mankind will be.

The life preservers that will be offered to her people, has been offered by a few brave men that have had the courage to write against their rotten Creed and Dogma.

W H. COX.

THE BLADE IS O. K.

Spokane, Wash.

Editor Blade:—

Enclosed find \$1.50 to (pay) renew my subscription which expired during July. I am glad to see you give space and voice to subscribers who have something of interest, appropriate for a paper like Blade. I enjoy the discussion of socialism as it is carried on in your columns, but I am surprised that a man like Mr. Groh isn't better posted on economics, for whenever a person in discussing socialism uses the terms dividing up—dividing up with the effortless, dividing up with the tramps,

etc.; then he lets the cat out of the bag and by these expressions imparts the information that he doesn't know anything not even the first principles regarding socialism.

I think Mr. Groh should study the question before going into a discussion on same. But he at least gives an opportunity to discuss the question and I enjoy it for all of that. The Blade is O. K.
H. T. AHRENS.

A VETERAN IN THE CAUSE.

Covington, Ky.

Editor Blade:—

Enclosed please find three dollars (\$3.00. To be placed to my credit. I am guilty of long delay on account of extreme age and chronic infirmities with a depleted exchequer. You know next Sunday week the 26 inst., I shall celebrate my ninety-second anniversary. I have been under treatment of Dr. J. B. Wilson one of your contributors, more or less, for the last year.

The "Blue Grass Blade" or "Damascus Blade" is a welcome weekly visitor. It compares well with other magazines only for its egregious typographical errors" you may not have a proof reader. If you

have he is very careless as well as the type setters.

SILAS ROCKWELL.

RAILWAY MEN, ATTENTION!

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Mrs. Josephine K. Henry, of Versailles, Ky., President of The Free-thought Federation of America writes as follows:

"Received the Synopsis of your book, 'The Teleo-Mechanics of Nature,' and read it with great profit and pleasure. It has opened up great fields of thought to me. I will keep your pamphlet near me; perhaps it will bring more light as I read and ponder. A world groping in darkness needs you. You are certainly a student, scientist and philosopher, and have scored several points against Haeckel that it seems to me cannot be controverted. I truly hope that your book will have a wide circulation in all lands and will be translated into many languages."

Prof. Ernest Haeckel writes:

"My dear Mr. Wettstein. Your treatise in the form of a Synopsis of your book 'The Teleo-Mechanics Of Nature, being a commendable critique of my World-Riddles, has been received and read with great interest. While we differ on a few questions, notably the one relating to the consciousness or unconsciousness of the mind in Nature, I sincerely hope that your masterly efforts will contribute much towards dispelling the obscurity and confusion prevailing in these momentous problems of Science and Philosophy."

With highest esteem, Yours," etc.

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